



News Release

For immediate release: September 8, 2009

(09-143)

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West Nile virus: King County reports first positive finding of 2009

OLYMPIA — King County has its first confirmed detection of West Nile virus in 2009, a crow found dead Aug. 24 in the Laurelhurst neighborhood of Seattle.

It's the third positive test for West Nile in birds this summer in Western Washington. A crow from Mason County tested positive in July and a Lewis County crow tested positive in August. The state's only confirmed human case this year was in a Klickitat County man in his 50s who is recovering. Statewide, positive results have been confirmed on 32 horses, 15 birds and 326 mosquito pools.

Updated figures are posted on the Washington State Department of Health's [West Nile virus](#) page.

The King County finding is a reminder the mosquito-borne disease remains active in the state. Typically, the few weeks surrounding Labor Day are the most active for the virus in Washington.

West Nile can cause serious illness, including encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the spinal cord and brain), and can be fatal. Symptoms may include fever, headache, body aches, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis and coma. People whose symptoms continue should seek health care.

The best way to fight West Nile is to prevent it. Because it's spread by mosquitoes that have fed on infected birds, avoiding mosquito bites is important. Try to stay inside at dusk and dawn, make sure windows and screens are tight, use mosquito repellents and, whenever possible, wear long sleeves and trousers.

Try to eliminate mosquito habitat around the home. Remove standing water in containers such as buckets, old tires, wading pools and birdbaths where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Make sure gutters are cleaned out so they don't hold standing water. Also, fix leaky outdoor faucets and sprinklers.

People who find dead birds may [report them online](#) to state or local public health agencies.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for a <i>healthy dose of information</i> .
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